

PLAN AMENDMENT FOR STOCK REBUILDING

Situation: Groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) amendment 12 addresses the Council's responsibility to prepare rebuilding plans for overfished stocks under its jurisdiction. The draft amendment (Attachment B.9.a.), which the Council first reviewed in September 1999, will establish a process the Council and NMFS will follow in developing rebuilding plans for overfished groundfish stocks. Amendment 12 would (1) establish rebuilding goals; (2) authorize suspension of the open access percentages so they may be modified without requiring another amendment; (3) authorize the Council to prohibit the vessels with limited entry permits from fishing in the open access fishery when the limited entry fishery is closed; and (4) declare the entire groundfish resource to be fully utilized, prohibiting foreign fishing and processing unless the FMP is amended to allow it. No specific regulations to implement the amendment are proposed at this time. However, the amendment will give the Council the authority to proposed regulations in the future.

The Council had scheduled final action on the amendment in November 1999. However, the Northwest Regional Office of NMFS advised the Council to delay final action until this meeting in order to free up staff resources to concentrate on preparing the annual specifications for the 2000 fishing year.

Council Action:

1. Final action on FMP amendment 12.

Reference Materials:

1. Draft amendment 12 (Attachment B.9.a.).
2. Draft environmental assessment (Supplemental Attachment (B.9.b.)).

PFMC
03/21/00